

Fabio Donato

(Napoli 1947)



Fabio Donato was born in Naples in 1947. In the 1960s his interests ranged from photography, poetry, music, painting, and architecture studies. In 1970 he made a long trip to India. Before that trip, he was not a professional photographer. He liked to photograph, explore the territories of the arts and the cultural transformations shooting with his Leica. In that period his approach to photography was the same of that he had with poetry, music, painting, and theater. That trip was the beginning of an existential and artistic path that will be expressed over the years with an accurate photographic research and contemporary artistic production.

In fact, the trip to India marked a turning point that had come to him, as in the totality of his actions, from the intuition that guided him towards choices sometimes thoughtful and then matured over time or towards decisions that led him to see a different point of view. Different because it contains the synthesis between personal and social culture that acts in the moment in which it expresses the artistic act and because it brings together the complex training of the photographer with the world, with the habitat and with what enlivens it.



From these impulses arose the exhibition dedicated to India, where a series of shots of calves and feet, in black and white, at natural height, social cross-section of the Indian urban suburbs, of material precariousness and human wealth, were set up in a continuum of frames distributed along the length of the walls at the international gallery Diaframma in Milan in 1971.

In 1972 the artwork won the silver plate at the *Biennale di Reportage* in Fermo.

From the same intuitions the shots arose, then known all over the world, made in 1969 at the Teatro Mediterraneo in Naples during the performance of the *Living Theatre* when Fabio Donato overturned the point of view and shot from the stage. Capturing in a gesture the very meaning of the *Living Theatre* that the audience staged, thus changing the perspective between actor and spectator, between scene and audience, between action and reception, in synthesis between objectivity and subjectivity.

Intuitions and points of view that are sensation and constant movement of the photographer, who stimulates through his images to the active role of those who use it. Another perspective that will shine through in future works.

From 1967 to today, a path along fifty years started, which will develop on two lines: artistic research intended as an expression of a visual poetics that investigates the themes of time, movement and threshold and reporting of contemporary movements in Italian and international arts.



In the autonomous process of his way of making photography the thoughts and artistic actions evolved, and projects such as "The City" were realized, an exhibition in Milan that included works of Luigi Ghirri, Franco Fontana, Luigi Albertini, put together by the gallerist Lanfranco Colombo. "The City" was a photographic research developed from 1970 to 2006, in which



urban details such as windows, televisions, monitors were boundaries of the private and thresholds with the outside, the other-than-itself that the artist has investigated since ever.

Topics such as the suspension of time, the threshold as a line of demarcation between spaces, times and opposing mental dimensions, and the "double", the relationship between reality and fiction, the other-than-itself are expressive territories of his poetics.

The experimentation of the poetic visuals still tells today the circularity of becoming, the thresholds, the before and the after.

His photography is also made of emotions transmitted and abstraction of thought.

In the 1980s he shared a deep artistic exchange with Ugo Mulas and it is starting from the work "Verifiche" of the famous photographer, in which the technical aspects of the basis of photography are run out, that Donato climbed on bolder terrain and right for his nature: those of perception. These aspects were developed with syncretic depth. As in the shots of Madrid in 2007 where in a single image made alive and present the circularity of life itself, which led the art critic Vincenzo Trione to say that "Fabio Donato's photography is not a narrative art, but rather an intimately poetic language with an intense evocative charge".

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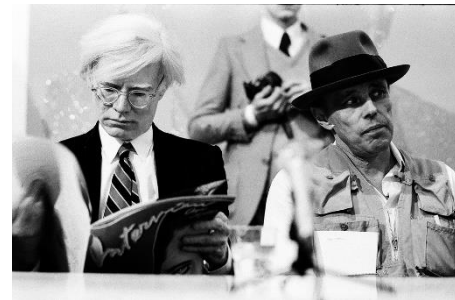
In those years he made photographs for the first two volumes of the *History of Ancient Sicily* curated by the archaeologist, academician of France, Georges Vallet, and volumes for the international editions (1996, 1997, 2005) of the Museum of Medicine in Paris.

He also participated in the international exhibition *Fuori dall'ombra* for the collections of the Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte and edit the photography of the catalogue of the collection that combines 20 years of research in the visual arts.

In 1985 he produced "DIETRO LE MURA", a social report about young people in juvenile prisons, which he published with a preface by the sociologist Alberto Abruzzese.

In those years, at the same time, he developed the direction of reportage on contemporary Italian and international artists. This work led him to consider himself as "a wanderer among the arts".

Since 1968 he has collaborated with the gallerist Lucio Amelio, shooting the artists also during the realization of their works, that have become part of the international collection "Terrae Motus" housed in the Museo Nazionale Reggia di Caserta and with the gallerist Peppe Morra and the international artists whose work has merged into the collections of the Museo Nitsch and the Associazione Shozo Shimamoto.



Furthermore, from 1976 he collaborated as a stage photographer with Eduardo De Filippo, playwright and international theater director and follows the experimental evolution of avant-garde theater with directors Mario Santella, Armando Pugliese, Luca de Fusco, Toni Servillo, Mario Martone, of which followed the evolution from theater to international cinema.



Fabio Donato and Joseph Beuys

The experiences of theater, dance, cinema, music, painting, sculpture, design, fashion, are read through the development of the work of the Neapolitan and international arts representatives operating in Naples, including Eduardo De Filippo, Toni Servillo, and Marcel Marceau for what concern the theatre; Mario Martone, Roberto Benigni, and Lina Wertmuller for what concern the cinema; Andy Warhol, Joseph Beuys, Helmut Newton, Robert Mapplethorpe, Hermann Nitsch, Jannis Kounellis, Mario Ceroli, Mimmo Paladino, Ernesto Tatafiore, and Vito Acconci for visual arts; Sting, Pino Daniele, Lucio Dalla, Ray Charles, and Chet Baker for music; Mario Valentino and Roberto Capucci for fashion; Gerardo Marotta and Lucio Amelio for culture, and many other personalities who today are part of his photographic archive that collects over 300,000 photographs.

Since 1990 he has taught photography at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bari, and then at the Academy of Fine Arts in Naples, where he founded and directed the Degree Course in Photography and still teaches.

The artistic awareness inspires the projects "MEDITERRANEO - Il Viaggiatore e le contaminazioni", which observes Magna Grecia in the delicate balance of the canons of beauty in the relationship between artistic product and contemporary nature, and "Contemporary Italian Fashion Mirrored In The Arts", which captures the network between the contemporary fashion design product reflected in the settings of the arts, inspired by the dress models of Roberto Capucci put in relation with the genius loci of the functional spaces of classical architecture and Gianni Molaro, in which the clothes enliven the stage of a nineteenth-century Neapolitan theater.



His work provides for international reports that brought him, after India, to China, Iraq, Cuba. Works collected in the "Visual Essays" projects that he exhibited in those countries, including, in 1982, at the Museum of Aesthetic Arts in Beijing and, in 2015, at the exhibition of the International Biennial of Photography in Jinan in China where he received the International Prize for Photography.

In 1982 he took part in the Biennale Internazionale delle Arti in Venice. In 2007 the Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte made the exhibition INFINITI, the anthology of the work of Fabio Donato, in Naples.

The archive of Fabio Donato represents an historical document of the photographic art and the contemporary international arts, whose photographs have been acquired by prestigious national museum collections such as the Museo di Arte Contemporanea della Metropolitana in Naples, the Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, and international museums in France, Brazil, China, Mexico.

Since 1969 solo and group exhibitions have been held in Nice, Angouleme, New York, San Francisco, Bilbao, Monaco, Saint Petersburg, São Paulo, Beijing, Jihan, La Habana, Toronto, Novi Sad and in Italy in Naples, Rome, Venice, Milan, Reggio Emilia, Caserta, Florence, Palermo, Capri, Genoa, Perugia.

Piero Berengo Gardin, Angelo Schwarz, Alberto Abruzzese, Vincenzo Trione, Luciano D'Alessandro, Luciana Libero, Georges Vallet, Angelo Trimarco, Michele Bonuomo have written about his work.